

CITY OF REDMOND
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
October 19, 2006

NOTE: These minutes are not a full transcription of the meeting. Tapes are available for public review in the Redmond Planning Department.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Dennis Cope, Robert Hall, and Sally Promer-Nichols

STAFF PRESENT: Steve Fischer, Senior Planner; Nathalie Schmidt, Assistant Planner; Asma Jeelani, Assistant Planner

The Design Review Board is appointed by the City Council to make decisions on design issues regarding site planning, building elevations, landscaping, lighting and signage. Decisions are based on the design criteria set forth in the Redmond Development Guide.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the Chairperson of the Design Review Board Sally Promer-Nichols at 7:12 PM. Design Review Board members Lee Madrid, David Scott Meade, Mery Velastegui and David Wobker were excused.

MINUTES: Quorum not present

PRE-APPLICATION

PRE060023, Microsoft West Campus Block C

Description: Construction of 1.1 million square feet of office space within 4 new office buildings on a 42-acre site. This proposal includes recreation space, a 4,700 stall underground parking garage, support service buildings, and a central plant. The project also includes realignment of 150th Avenue NE between NE 36th Street and NE 40th Street.

Location: 15305 NE 40th Street

Applicant: Barry Vaudrin with Callison Architecture

Staff Contact: Kerry Kriner / 425-556-2464

Asma Jeelani, Assistant Planner, presented the staff report for Kerry Kriner who was not present. This was the second pre-application review for this project. The City has the following concerns: the development needs to have connections to the streets; needs to meet Green Street standards for NE 40th Street; the four office buildings need to be divided at the base; there should be a strong base; the rooftop mechanical equipment must be incorporated into the design; and there should be a little more horizontal modulation, such as some recesses or stairwell treatment.

Rick Phillippe, with Callison Architects, 1420 5th Ave, Seattle, WA 98101, explained that the basic concept has stayed the same as the last pre-application review, with all four buildings proposed to be four stories and a four-story underground garage for 4,700 cars. There would also be surface parking for about 200 cars. Microsoft's plan is to get some land back and develop a campus. The shapes of the buildings have two wings, a flying form taken from the former Eddie Bauer building. There is fluidity and movement on the site. The buildings open up to a Commons area. The through buildings have a skylight atrium and go through to the Commons area. They have modulated the building design, breaking the building down to small components. They broke the facades down in terms of the overall mass. Along NE 40th Street, there must be a 27- to 45-foot setback. The internal areas have feature walls that run through the atrium. There is stone at the corners of the buildings that wraps through the buildings to create a sense of place. There is an outside sense in the atrium. The stairway towers are made of glass so there is an outside feel. On much of the Microsoft campus, the trees create the base of the building, with more design attention to the tops and the corners.

Mark Brumbaugh, Brumbaugh & Associates, landscape architects for this project, presented the refinements to the original master plan. There is a vertical iconic backdrop and a large wayfinding area. There are athletic sports courts and outdoor dining spaces. Along NE 40th Street there is not much in the way of trees because there is not room since there is a lot of infrastructure along the road. Stormwater retention requires some massive vaults. They are not planning to save the trees in the dark green area on the landscape plan. There is great benefit to putting so many cars underground, but this makes tree preservation difficult. In terms of other site changes, they have cleaned up the parking dropoff to provide a rear access to Building 92 and cleaned up the surface lot of Building 92. They used a Northwest treatment. Each building has a courtyard that opens out toward the central space. Building 96's courtyard faces south and toward the campus green. The meadow fits with the exposure. Building 94 seemed natural for the forest area near the Eddie Bauer building. There are a lot of native understory plants. The building faces north, and there is a lush Northwest forest garden. Building 97 has a coastal theme, with a garden that uses some stone, water and beachlike elements. Building 95 has a mountain theme, and they have created some rock outcroppings. The four buildings are fairly similar. The center court seems like the natural entry to the west campus. The commons area will be attractive enough that people from other parts of the campus will come there. They may do a large water feature at the entrance. He described the commons area in more detail, but noted that this is still a work in progress. There could be a population of as many as 5,000 employees on this campus. They are planning on outside seating for about 500 people, with some seating up tight against the building and also some pocket patio spaces.

COMMENTS FROM THE DRB MEMBERS:

MR. HALL:

- Encouraged the applicants in the direction they are headed, especially getting away from the rigidity of the previous buildings designed for Microsoft in the past.
- Liked the way the plan is opening up and having a more random quality.
- Was concerned about the character of the buildings.
- Noted that stone was the first building material. He was uncomfortable to see ledgestone on buildings like this.
- Thought that where they do the feature walls that are primarily stone there seems to be a lack of base. Stone is heavy. The openings do not need to be so large. A punched opening would make it stronger in appearance no matter with what they cover it—suggested solid soffits with a wood finish.
- Was encouraged particularly by the planning aspects of the proposal, especially the Commons building.

MR. COPE:

- Thought this an excellent package, clearly articulated and informative.
- Thought the site design described in the second paragraph, using the coastal, meadow, mountain and forest themes, to be a very rich idea.
- Thought they were trying for a college-type campus that evolves over time with continuity in certain ways. They should build this campus in such a way to avoid the negative terms of office campuses.
- Did not think each building should be standalone, although there is a bit of sameness about the campus that should be addressed.
- Thought addressing the three distinctive movements of pedestrians through the campus was good.
- Appreciated that different elevations of the buildings addressed the sun; hoped they would push that concept as far as they could.
- Liked that they were borrowing materials and colors from the Eddie Bauer building; liked the natural stone.
- Confirmed that the applicant would be enhancing the pedestrian crossing at NE 150th Street shown on page 2 and would try to draw pedestrians to that crossing to mitigate people crossing at various other points. He continued to think of that as critical and being the strongest way to invite the users and staff from across the street. Encouraged the applicant to do that on both sides of the street.
- Commented in reference to page 3, View from NW, that there appeared to be not as strong a campus entry there than maybe they could push, using a gateway kind of mentality. This could also be a major pedestrian entry.
- Suggested a water feature, or something that falls strongly on that axis, near the turnaround.

- Commented that the diagram on page 4 was helpful because it tells what is good and what is weak with the linkages—maybe it is the grade issues. The Burke-Gilman Trail is such an important amenity, being adjacent to the campus. Encouraged a link to that to encourage its use and to invite people from both directions.
- Noted that there is a significant bus stop on SR 520. There would be 5,000 people on this campus. Encouraged adding something really user friendly that makes the walk from the bus to the campus better for the pedestrians. Recommended emphasizing anything that encourages people to get out of the car. (Mr. Brumbaugh confirmed that the applicant is planning to make a strong pedestrian link there.)
- Commented regarding page 10 that the corners that pop out of the stone walls might want to articulate differently than the long walls on the other side.
- Agreed with Mr. Hall about the composition of the buildings as shown on page 12; bothered him that the base is not stronger. All the spandrels went away. The most troublesome thing is the first floor. (Mr. Phillippe agreed that the buildings need a little more base.)
- Said he hoped they would make the various details of window treatments, overhangs and light control devices orientation specific.
- Noted that page 13 indicates more photos than those shown. He thought the others would have shown the Eddie Bauer building.
- Recommended that the applicant remove the basketball court shown on page 17 from the forest theme. (Mr. Phillippe responded that the basketball court sits on the roof of a storm detention vault.)
- Reiterated about the links to the trail and to the bus, referring to page 18.

MS. PROMER-NICHOLS:

- Liked the site plan and would use this when she teaches because seldom does the DRB receive such a strong concept. Would love for the applicant to push that concept as far as they could beyond the landscape.
- Appreciated the underground parking.
- Liked the building forms, as well as the interesting and dynamic assemblage of building parts.
- Liked the street going through the commons; has a Whistler reference as the blocks are pretty short there. The generation working at Microsoft loves that vitality.
- Liked the glass stairwells. Thought there to be a jewel quality about them.
- Questioned how the buildings met the ground.
- Did not get a sense of the entries yet. (The applicant would address the entries at the next review.)

Regarding a pedestrian connection at Building 92, Mr. Phillippe explained that they are looking at reconfiguring the paths that encourage mid-block crossing to do what makes sense with the new alignment of 150th Avenue NE. They are also exploring using a canopy cover for the pathway from Building 92 to 150th Avenue NE.

Mr. Fischer commented that there is a better building connection between Building 99 and Eddie Bauer to avoid pedestrian/vehicle conflicts. Even mid-block would provide a safe spot for pedestrians, because people would cross there anyway.

Mr. Brumbaugh responded that they are only comfortable with pedestrian crossings at intersections.

Although the meeting should have been closed before the first pre-application review—**It was moved by Mr. Cope and seconded by Mr. Hall to close the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Motion carried (3-0).**

PRE-APPLICATION

PRE060055, Kohl's Department Store

Description: Redevelopment of existing Mervyn's department store building to accommodate a Kohl's department store

Location: 17601 Union Hill Road

Applicant: Matt MacRostie with WRG Design, Inc.

Staff Contact: Nathalie Schmidt / 425-556-2471

Nathalie Schmidt, Assistant Planner, presented the staff report on this project involving the remodel of the existing 79,487 square foot Mervyn's structure by adding an interior mezzanine and doing other interior modifications, exterior façade modifications, and modified and new exterior wall signage. Improvements to the site include reconstruction of the concrete sidewalk/plaza area along the south and east building edges, and repaving (asphalt overlay) and restriping the existing surface parking lots with no new parking stalls added. The existing site is 22 percent landscaped, which just meets the minimum requirement for the Gateway Design District. Staff requested that the Design Review Board evaluate the appropriateness of the proposed colors and new materials on the exterior facades, the suitability of the new Kohl's signage, and the proposed requirement that any new or replaced rooftop mechanical equipment be screened by an appropriate design and material(s) compatible with the project.

Jeffrey Stowe, Architect, 244 N Broadway, Milwaukee, WI 53202, explained that the applicant proposes to remodel the building inside and try to give the building entrance elements to help identify that there is a different retailer. For the two existing entrances, they are keeping them in the same location and recladding them with a variety of materials, such as granite tile, a canopy detail that comes out at the entry, transparent and opaque glass on the side of the entry. The colors will be the reverse of the current colors.

COMMENTS BY THE DRB MEMBERS:

MR. HALL:

- Did not have a problem with what he saw.
- Was not fond of the Mervyn's building.

MR. COPE:

- Considered this an improvement to the former Mervyn's building.
- Thought this was a much more sophisticated design for a big box.
- Was fine with all of it.
- Would like to see something that represents the coating and colors at the next review.
- Agreed with the staff recommendation to require any new or replaced rooftop mechanical equipment to be screened by an appropriate design and material(s) compatible with the project.

MS. PROMER-NICHOLS:

- Said she was never a fan of the Mervyn's building.
- Thought that the landscaping was pretty well addressed, but as they move forward staff would have to determine landscaping counts. (The applicant said they would enhance the diamond aisles and missing trees.)
- Suggested that this might be an opportunity to enhance the façade and highlight the sign.

Mr. Fischer confirmed that the Design Review Board thought the project was ready for approval at the next review. He encouraged the applicant to work with staff on putting together their packet. The applicant would provide photos to show that rooftop covering is sufficient.

PRE-APPLICATION

PRE060056, Dominion Townhouses

Description: Dominion townhouses consisting of nine residential units with three townhouses, six flat apartments, and underground parking on 0.30 acres of site

Location: 8081 170th PI NE

Applicant: Christopher Peragine

Staff Contact: Asma Jeelani / 425-556-2443

Asma Jeelani, Assistant Planner, presented the staff report, describing the site as one that slopes from north to south. She had listed nine discussion issues in the staff report.

Christopher Peragine, 665 W. Emerson Street, Seattle, WA 98119, was very defensive about the staff recommendations, saying that he took exception with all the recommendations, and explained why point by

point. The Design Review Board members tried to reason with him, but he was quite upset about the staff report. He explained that they are proposing to have Hardiboard panels with 1x2 cedar battens with one texture and also colored material panels, free-formed in some fashion. There would be 8-foot deep roof overhangs supported by steel columns to cover the walkway on the south-facing façade. There would be split-faced block at the base.

COMMENTS BY THE DRB MEMBERS:

MR. HALL:

- Commented that the drawings were not clear enough to come up with responses to what the applicant had presented. He did not understand the drawings.
- Questioned if there were one or two access points to the underground parking.
- Confirmed that the elevator went to every entry level.
- Wanted to know if the project met the overall requirements and suggested that this be put into a matrix format so the DRB could compare the requirements and applicant proposals.
- Asked the applicant if there was a territorial view to the south and a street to the north. He suggested putting the elevator on the north side of the building so it would not be in the way of the view of all those units. He thought the entry of the building wanted to be on the north.
- Said he thought this was a complicated structure.
- Thought the colors should be other than brown and gray. The building wants dramatic articulation.
- Liked that the applicant presented hand-drawn drawings, but did not feel there was sufficient explanation of the plan levels and how the proposal met existing Building Code requirements.

MR. COPE:

- Commented that the applicant started with a level of hostility that made no sense at all and explained that the applicant was addressing the DRB members and not staff at the DRB meeting. He further explained that the comments and recommendations from staff are just that. What the DRB would have expected at this meeting was what they had heard from the other applicants preceding this pre-application review—not a hostile defense point by point. He considered that they did not get a presentation on the project at this pre-application review.
- Said he would expect at the next review some good contextual photos of what is going on around the site and to see samples of the materials to get a better understanding of what is being used.
- Commented that if he were a resident he would want to get to his front door without having to go from the stair tower to outside again.

MS. PROMER-NICHOLS:

- Commented that the site plan looks fairly schematic. For the next review the site plan, or what is happening to the rest of the site, needs to be addressed, especially how people would get to the units from the street.
- Said she was concerned that the open space provided would not be used because it appears to be part of the three-story units rather than public open space. (The applicant explained that they were hoping that the site furniture would make the public open space feel common to everyone.)

ADJOURNMENT

IT WAS MOVED BY MR. HALL AND SECONDED BY MR. COPE TO ADJOURN AT 9:30 PM. MOTION CARRIED (3-0).

MINUTES APPROVED ON

RECORDING SECRETARY